
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 874

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' STATUTES.

SUMMARY:

This bill creates a 23-member Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council, as a successor to an independent council established in connection with a previous pilot program, to advise the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) commissioner on autism issues. The council consists of nine state officials or their designees, six gubernatorial appointments, and eight members appointed by legislative leaders. The council will terminate on June 30, 2018.

The bill limits appointed members of the State Interagency Birth-to-Three Coordinating Council to two consecutive terms, although they may continue to serve until a successor is appointed. The bill also increases the council's membership by one. Current law provides that members include, among various others, a person with policy making authority designated by the commissioner or executive director of each of the participating state agencies. The bill eliminates this reference regarding a Department of Education representative, instead designating two members from the department for inclusion on the council: the state coordinators of (1) education for homeless children and youth and (2) early childhood special education.

By law, child health care providers, schools, and specified others must refer parents of a child younger than age three who is suspected of or at risk of having a developmental delay to the Birth-to-Three program. The referral is not required if the person or entity knows the child has already been referred. Current law requires such a referral within two working days of the person identifying the child in this manner. The bill instead requires the referral as soon as possible but not later than seven calendar days after the identification. This change

conforms to a change in federal regulations (34 C.F.R. § 303.303).

The bill also makes minor, technical, and clarifying changes to DDS statutes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: the provisions creating the advisory council are effective July 1, 2013; the other provisions are effective October 1, 2013

§§ 1-2 – AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER ADVISORY COUNCIL

The bill creates an Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council, effective July 1, 2013. Effective October 1, 2013, it substitutes a reference to this new council for a reference to a previously established independent council charged with advising the DDS commissioner on all matters relating to autism.

The Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council created by the bill consists of the following members:

1. the commissioners of DDS, children and families, education, mental health and addiction services, public health, rehabilitation services, and social services, or their designees;
2. the Office of Policy and Management secretary, or his designee;
3. the executive director of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, or his designee;
4. two people with autism spectrum disorder, one each appointed by the governor and House speaker;
5. two people who are parents or guardians of a child with autism spectrum disorder, one each appointed by the governor and Senate minority leader;
6. two people who are parents or guardians of an adult with autism spectrum disorder, one each appointed by the Senate president pro tempore and House majority leader;
7. two advocates for people with autism spectrum disorder, one

each appointed by the governor and House speaker;

8. two licensed professionals working in the field of autism spectrum disorder, one each appointed by the governor and Senate majority leader;
9. two people who provide services for people with autism spectrum disorder, one each appointed by the governor and House minority leader; and
10. two representatives of a higher education institution in the state with experience in the field of autism spectrum disorder, one each appointed by the governor and Senate president pro tempore.

Under the bill, the council's chairpersons are: (1) the DDS Commissioner or his designee and (2) one elected by the council members. The council must make rules for conducting its affairs and meet at least four times per year and at such other times as the chairpersons request. Council members serve without compensation.

The council must advise the DDS commissioner on all matters relating to autism, including (1) policies and programs for people with autism spectrum disorder, (2) services provided by DDS' Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services, and (3) implementing the recommendations of the autism feasibility study (a study required by PA 11-6 to consider the needs of people with autism spectrum disorder). The council may also recommend policy and program changes to the commissioner to improve support services for people with autism spectrum disorder.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

SB 1029, reported favorably by the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, retains health insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorder as defined in the fourth edition of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, rather than the most recent edition of the manual (a new edition is

scheduled for release in May 2013).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 28 Nay 0 (03/11/2013)